

## Characteristics of Faculty Who Adopt Community Service Learning Pedagogy

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*This research draws from literature on the diffusion and adoption of innovations to explore the theoretical foundation for research on faculty as adopters of pedagogical innovation. This research's purpose was to determine the characteristics of faculty who engage in innovative pedagogy, specifically community service learning (CSL). The researchers analyzed faculty responses from 32 structured interviews completed at a large metropolitan, southwestern university. Results suggest that faculty who engage in CSL pedagogy share many attitudes, beliefs, and values about teaching, learning, and community. CSL, respondents said, satisfies various faculty/teaching, student/learning, and community/nonprofit needs. Sustaining faculty participation was noted as a significant challenge in perpetuating CSL efforts; however, results suggest a learning-driven model enables a self-perpetuating process that involves increasing faculty numbers to effect cultural change in the university.*

### Context and Background

The origins for CSL in the United States are found early in the 20th century. Though referred to by other names such as social reconstruction, advocacy and activism, historically, students have been encouraged to identify social issues, examine and analyze them with the goal of social change (Westheimer & Kahne, 1998). Unique to CSL, of course, is the aspect of critical guided reflection—a tool for integrating classroom learning with community service learning. The recent surge of support received from colleges and universities around the country has been instrumental in linking those same universities to the communities in which they reside (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Not only are the best practices of CSL designed to “enhance the student learning experience to create self-motivated learners who become civic participants” (Marullo & Edwards, 2000, p. 746), but ideally offer a visible response to our communities’ changing economic, political, and social needs. Given this innovative and ideological vision of what CSL is designed to do, why do only some faculty take advantage of this pedagogical opportunity? Abes, Jackson, and Jones (2002) have provided CSL practitioners with a list of faculty motivators and deterrents to adopting CSL pedagogy. Identifying these determinants clarifies our understanding of the need for external support for faculty to do CSL. But what internal factors prompt faculty to engage in CSL pedagogy? Once the institutional support is provided, who chooses to “take the risk” associated with adopting the innovation? Drawing from the

research literature on the diffusion and adoption of innovations, the authors explored the theoretical foundation for focusing on faculty as adopters of pedagogical innovation. Specifically, this project’s purpose was to augment our understanding of faculty characteristics of those who engage in innovative pedagogy such as CSL.

### *The Diffusion and Adoption of the Innovation Process*

The diffusion and adoption of the innovation model used in this research stems from the work of Rogers (1971), and Zaltman and Duncan (1977). As Rogers notes, the key to our understanding of innovation and change is the knowledge that while an innovation can be introduced into a system, its success is largely determined by recognizing and accepting its benefits and the degree to which these outweigh the costs. An innovation is defined as “an idea, practice, or object perceived as ‘new’ by an individual . . . ‘newness’ may be expressed in knowledge, attitude, or regarding a decision to use it” (Rogers, p. 19); additionally, an innovation “triggers change” (Spence, 1994, p. 253). The process by which the diffusion and adoption of innovations occurs is integral to guaranteeing that members of the system become aware of, and interested in, the value of the innovation. Once the information about the innovation is *diffused* (made available to the members of the organization), the innovation is then evaluated by weighing the benefits against potential costs. If benefits are perceived to outweigh costs, members will move to a trial period and eventual adoption (Greene, Harchih, &

Kohli, 1996; Rogers). Once introduced to the innovation, potential adopters range from *innovators* to *laggards*—innovators are eager to try new ideas and laggards are suspicious of and usually the last to adopt an innovation (Rogers). We return to this distinction later.

The process of change begins when members recognize the need and/or relevance of the innovation being proposed. This stage is referred to as *perception*. For those open to ideas for social change, the next stage is characterized by *motivation* to seek out additional information to determine whether the innovation will solve a particular problem; individuals resistant to change are usually comfortable with the status quo and unlikely to move into this stage. Once introduced to the innovation, the next stage determines the development of cognitive, affective, and behavioral *attitudes* toward the innovation. These attitudes are realized through social interaction, review of published materials, and other credible sources of information. If attitudes are favorable, behavioral change is likely (i.e., adoption of the innovation). During the *legitimation* stage, the individual seeks out reinforcement from colleagues to determine the acceptability of the innovation and potential for change; effective communication skills are integral to moving from legitimation. Once the individual determines the acceptability of the innovation, they move to the *trial* stage by putting the innovation to a personal test. The *evaluation* stage offers the opportunity to evaluate benefits and costs experienced during the trial period. Finally, the individual either *adopts* or *rejects* the innovation after weighing the benefits and costs. This stage also represents commitment to continued use and dissemination of information about the innovation to colleagues (Zaltman & Duncan, 1977).

### *Innovation and Change in Higher Education*

Change in higher education institutions is often a response to social and public needs guiding educational reform (Ferren & Mussell, 2000); hence, “change in education always is more political than professional,” and is generally motivated “from outside rather than from within” (Stiles & Robinson, 1973, p. 257). Change in education may be furthered or frustrated by economic or political conditions—change often costs money. In public institutions, taxpayers and their political representatives have a voice in determining how much funding a program will receive, and providing the support and resources needed to guarantee its successful implementation (Rothman, Erlich, & Teresa, 1976).

Change in the field of education is produced by pedagogical innovations that lead to modifications

in curriculum and instruction. However, “putting new discoveries to work in the field of education as with other forces for change, requires changes in values, attitudes, and traditions for both the general public and members of the education professions” (Stiles & Robinson, 1973, p. 265). Change in values, attitudes and traditions essentially effect a change in an institution’s culture. Admittedly, “changing the culture and attitudes underpinning professional practice is a greater challenge” than simply mandating the practice itself (Williamson, 1998, p. 7). Fortunately, change in attitudes and culture often goes hand-in-hand with faculty professional development (Bates, 2000; Prentice, 2002). One way to guarantee that faculty have the opportunity to put new discoveries into practice is to provide the resources needed to develop and maintain changes in curriculum and instruction (Hinck & Brandell, 2000; Rothman, Erlich, & Teresa, 1976). Support and resources can be channeled in accordance with faculty development opportunities to introduce and provide instruction in pedagogical innovations (Zlotkowski, 2000).

Williamson (1998) advocates that institutional change of this magnitude is facilitated by careful and systematic strategic planning that when implemented, changes the meaning of professional practice. In this way, change is system-wide, and supporting mechanisms are put in place both strategically and practically.

Collaboration among practitioners and interested faculty, staff, students, and administrators can produce a strategic plan for CSL that all pertinent stakeholders adopt and use. Such a plan defines the stakeholder’s collective thinking on the philosophical underpinnings for their work, guides the institutional approach to service-learning, and provides a blueprint for action (Rozee & Randall, 2000).

By definition, developing and implementing CSL programs in higher education institutions should systematically involve community input to guide the process. As King (2000) notes, “change is a process and communities must be an integral part of this process if schools are to be successful in their reform efforts; communities that are involved early have a vested interest in making it work...getting communities involved is more than just building alliances, it is also about building relationships” (p. 34). Abes, Jackson, and Jones (2002) found that community involvement is a significant motivating factor for faculty involvement in CSL efforts. Logically then, in order to systematize CSL in higher education institutions, we must include building relationships with community partners. In the case of CSL, the community acts as both agent and recipient of the changes brought

about by adopting the pedagogical innovation.

Based on the ideas we have reviewed so far, the formula for successfully implementing change in higher education requires three key components: systematic support within the institution to support faculty efforts, community involvement, and faculty who are willing to participate in change efforts once they become aware of the innovation. Who among the faculty is more or less likely to act upon that awareness and evaluate the usefulness of and potentially adopt the pedagogy?

#### *Characteristics of Faculty Who Adopt Innovations*

The diffusion and adoption of innovations model offers conceptual understanding of how individuals process information to which they are exposed, and ultimately decide to accept or reject the innovation. For example, selective *exposure* refers to the tendency to *attend* to information consistent with an individual's existing attitudes and beliefs; selective *perception* suggests that an individual *interprets* information in terms of their existing attitudes and beliefs. Needs are defined as desires outweighing actualities, and "an individual may develop a need when they learn that an improved method, an innovation, exists" (Rogers, 1971, p. 105). Hassinger and Pinkerton (1986) argue that innovations are more likely to be effective if individuals perceive the innovation to be consistent with their attitudes and beliefs, and relevant to their needs. Additionally, knowledge about how to use an innovation properly and the functioning principles underlying the innovation are necessary for successful adoption. Agents of change can use this information to create needs and design messages by pointing out desirable consequences of the innovation.

Altogether, these factors are the foundation for differentiating individual predispositions toward adoption. The adopter categories offered by the diffusion and adoption of innovations model include innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards; each category is typified by certain personality variables and communication behaviors that define an individual's predisposition toward adoption. For example, *innovators* are eager to try new ideas, deal with abstractions, perceive that they have greater ability to control their future, demonstrate greater rationality (use the most effective means to achieve an end), are daring and willing to take risks, and demonstrate high levels of opinion leadership; they are highly integrated into systems, participate socially, and seek out information about the unfamiliar. *Early adopters* are likely to function as leaders, welcome new ideas, have greater empathy (can project themselves into the

role of the other); they communicate effectively, are more social, expose themselves to sources of communication, are role models and respected by peers, and are likely to provide information and advice to potential adopters. The *early majority* is less likely to function in a leadership capacity, they adopt new ideas just before the average person, function as an important link in the diffusion process, are willing followers but not leaders, are social but do not necessarily seek out social functions. The *late majority* is skeptical; they adopt an innovation out of economic necessity and/or in response to increased pressure, and make their decision after others have tested the innovation. The *laggards* are more traditional in their approach, are the last to adopt, do not engage in opinion leadership, are somewhat isolated, and their decision to adopt is made depending upon the information disseminated by others (balancing the successes and failures) (Rogers, 1971).

Paramount to the diffusion process and successful adoption are those early adopters who selectively expose themselves to information and subsequently perceive it as both consistent with existing attitudes and beliefs, *and* fulfilling a need. These individuals are likely to carefully weigh benefits against costs and take the risk to test and eventually adopt the innovation.

This study argues that CSL is an innovative pedagogy requiring support and resources necessary to guarantee successful adoption. Thus it is important to turn to the research literature on CSL to understand the known factors in faculty adopting CSL.

#### *Factors Important to Faculty Adopting CSL*

The last few years have seen increasing scholarship that investigates factors influencing faculty adopting CSL (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Driscoll, 2000; Fairweather & Beach, 2002; Giles & Eyler, 1998). Extant research has identified the critical role of institutional support for CSL faculty efforts (Bringle, Hatcher, & Games, 1997; Bringle & Hatcher; Pickeral & Peters, 1996; Zlotkowski, 1998); discovered the potential for concrete CSL outcomes for faculty and students (Bringle & Hatcher; Steinke & Buresh, 2002); revealed the challenges associated with recruitment, institutionalization, and institutional culture and climate with regard to supporting CSL (Furco, 2001; O'Byrne, 2001; Prentice, 2002; Ward, 1996); demonstrated the potential for renewing faculty careers and teaching (Engstrom & Tinto, 1997; Weigert, 1998; Zlotkowski, 1997); and illustrated the importance of involving the community in developing CSL programs (Yarmolinsky & Martello, 1996).

Previous research has also explored course-

based factors that motivate faculty to incorporate CSL into their teaching (Hammond, 1994; Hesser, 1995). Findings suggest that faculty value active and experiential learning opportunities that improve students' analytical and problem solving skills, promote self-direction, and involve students in the learning process (Cantor, 1995). Taking this research one step further toward satisfying the need for faculty-based research, Abes, Jackson, and Jones (2002) identified specific motivators and deterrents for faculty engagement in CSL. Not surprisingly, results revealed that balancing professional responsibilities and concerns for student learning were major issues. They recommended that involving the community and receiving support from colleagues were significant factors in motivating the use of CSL. Additionally, results suggested that faculty insist on empirical evidence in support of student learning outcomes associated with CSL activities and research is already being directed to fulfill this need (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Steinke & Buresh, 2002). Deterrents were primarily systemic including the need for logistical support, evidence in support of academic outcomes, faculty instruction/support in effective use of CSL, and recognition in the faculty reward system (Abes, Jackson, & Jones).

Aside from the need for external support sources for faculty to do CSL, what are the internal factors that prompt faculty to engage in CSL pedagogy? Important questions remain unanswered with regard to characteristics of those faculty who choose to selectively expose themselves to information about CSL, weigh the benefits and costs, and subsequently, perceive that information to be consistent with their existing attitudes and beliefs and fulfilling various needs. Therefore, the following questions guide this study: *What are the shared attitudes, beliefs and values of faculty who engage in CSL? What needs does CSL satisfy? What are the perceived benefits and costs of adopting CSL?*

### Methodology

The qualitative approach utilized for this study is appropriate to studying new and emerging topics. As noted by Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) "one of the clearest channels for learning about the inner world is through verbal accounts and stories presented by individual narrators about their lives and their experienced reality" (p. 7). Bickman & Rog (1998) refer to this method as real-world measures to study real-life issues. The method is a particularly powerful tool for exploratory research. Since we are using a theoretical model not previously used to study this population or the issue of CSL, we wanted the fullest

possible range of responses from participants without the constrictions of survey-type questions. Thus the open-ended guided interview was most appropriate to this study.

### Sample

Purposive sampling techniques were used to obtain a sample of tenured ( $n = 11$ ) and tenure-track ( $n = 15$ ) faculty, and part-time ( $n = 2$ ) and full-time ( $n = 4$ ) lecturers from a large southwestern, metropolitan university ( $N = 32$ ). On this campus, faculty efforts to adopt CSL are supported through a Community Service Learning Center (CSLC) staffed by a director (whose primary responsibilities are administrative), associate director (whose primary responsibility is to facilitate faculty work), a community partnerships coordinator (whose primary responsibilities are to establish community partnerships and facilitate community placements), and a service-learning coordinator (who is responsible for scheduling and student issues, and facilitates faculty access to resources and information.) The CSLC is supported through both system-wide state and university funding through the Division of Academic Affairs. The CSLC is currently in its sixth year of supporting faculty work. During that time, more than 100 faculty have benefited directly from CSLC services, resulting in the development of more than 200 regularly offered CSL courses. The center offers faculty workshops for CSL course development; and more recently, guidance in the presentation of CSL work in the RTP (Retention, Tenure, and Promotion) process,<sup>1</sup> assistance with individual faculty CSL research projects, and other functions.

Faculty in our sample were contacted because they had participated in course development workshops offered during the first four years of the Center's existence. These faculty represented six of seven colleges from across campus, including the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Natural Sciences and Math, Business Administration, Health and Human Services, Education, and Arts; hence, our sample represents both discipline and subject diversity. They had taught on the current campus for an average of 8.93 years, were qualified to teach approximately nine courses in their respective departments (approximately four on a regular basis) and had taught at least one as a CSL course since receiving instruction through the workshop program. Twenty-nine had become aware of CSL pedagogy on their current campus; three had been exposed to information prior to arriving at this campus. All appropriate means for securing human subjects were approved through the campus Institutional Review Board (IRB).

## Instruments

The original interview protocol was developed based on the theoretical foundations drawn from Roger's (1971) model for the diffusion and adoption of innovations. Faculty participants were asked questions representing each of the stages of the adoption process. For example:

- Perception (recognizing the need and/or relevance of the innovation)

When and by what means did you first hear of service-learning? What need did you think service-learning would fulfill in your teaching? Your courses? How long after you learned of service-learning did you decide to incorporate it into your own courses?)

- Motivation (seeking out additional information to determine whether the innovation will solve a particular problem)

Did service-learning seem like a good solution to a particular teaching problem with which you were faced? What were those problems? How did you see CSL as a solution? What community problems do you see as potentially being solved by the CSL intervention? What have you found most challenging about CSL?

- Attitude (developing cognitive, affective, and behavioral *attitudes* toward the innovation that are realized through social interaction, review of published materials, and other credible information sources)

How have readings, information from others, or other factors influenced your adopting CSL? Have you been in regular contact with other CSL faculty during the change process? Are you aware that service-learning is supported by many professional organizations such as the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE)?

- Legitimation (seeking reinforcement from colleagues to determine the acceptability of the innovation and the potential for change)

Have you attended any CSL conferences, lectures, workshops, or other activities? Do you think your own faculty cohort is supportive of your efforts? In what way(s) do you think adoption of service-learning will enhance the evaluation of your work in the review process?

- Trial (putting the innovation to a personal test)

Were there others who helped you to work through the process of adopting CSL? How successful was your first attempt at CSL for your courses (in terms of teaching, student learning, and community benefit)?

- Evaluation (taking the opportunity to evaluate the pros and cons (benefits and costs) experienced during the trial period)

What do you see as CSL's pros and cons from your own experience? What is your evaluation of the effectiveness of CSL for your courses (in terms of teaching, student learning, and community benefit)? Have your students evaluated their learning through CSL (either through reflection activities and/or the formal evaluation process)?

- Adoption/Rejection (*adopting or rejecting* the innovation after weighing the benefits and costs. This stage also represents commitment to continued use and dissemination of information about the innovation to colleagues)

Were you convinced of the value of CSL before and after you tried it in your course? Have you advocated CSL to other faculty? What do you think are the probable shared values of CSL to faculty? How would you assess the long-term value of CSL to faculty? Do you have plans to design or convert any other courses to CSL?

Participants were asked to respond to these questions according to their experiences with CSL; their responses were expected to reveal themes related to each stage of the adoption process and characteristics within each adopter category. Participants were also asked to complete an information sheet during the interview that detailed their appointment status, years of teaching, discipline, courses taught, and other information pertinent to this study. All participants responded to the same questions as detailed in the interview protocol approved by the IRB; in some cases, however, prompts were used to obtain more detailed information.

## Procedures

Participants were contacted individually to participate in the interview process. Individual interview sessions were scheduled at the participants' convenience; sessions averaged one hour. Participants were informed in advance that the sessions would be audiotaped and transcribed for analysis. Participants were asked to sign informed consent forms per established IRB procedure. Participants were debriefed following each interview.

Each tape was transcribed according to the original interview format using transcription software. The transcripts were then prepared for analysis. Data analysis involved content analysis of the interview results using standard procedures for classifying units (Manning & Cullum-Swan, 1994). To analyze the transcripts, two coders were trained to code the transcripts and two coders were

trained in data analysis procedures. Coding included the identification of key terms, themes, and theory-based concepts. Data analysis included identifying patterns and/or themes in the responses, categorization, and category description (by name). Resulting categories were compared to determine intercoder reliability and discussion between coders was encouraged to resolve any discrepancies or modify categories in which acceptable minimum responses had not been achieved. In most cases, discrepancies were resolved, resulting in an intercoder reliability of 0.85, which was determined to be acceptable for this exploratory study (Holsti, 1969).

## Results

The diffusion and adoption of innovations model offers a framework for understanding the critical role of faculty who recognize the value of CSL as a pedagogical innovation. Faculty should range from *innovators* to *laggards* in accordance with how much they perceive the innovation to be consistent with their attitudes, beliefs and values; the capacity of the innovation to fulfill their needs; and how much benefits outweigh the costs of adoption. Categorization into one of the adopter categories was based on how long faculty engaged in the processes of evaluation and legitimization following the initial contact. Their responses ranged from acting immediately ("nothing slowed my decision to try it," "I tried it right away") to up to a three year delay. Those who immediately moved to the *test/trial* period (within one semester) identified specific pedagogical needs they believed CSL would satisfy. Once they made the decision to integrate CSL into their respective course, they readily developed the course syllabus and identified viable placements for their students via CSLC workshops. These faculty, by definition, are the *early adopters*. Faculty who delayed the decision to test CSL identified demands on time, lack of support from chair/colleagues, concerns with CSL and the RTP process, perceived amount of work, issues with applicability/appropriateness to their courses, course scheduling ("I teach this class once a week at night"), and finding a community placement as significant factors. In some cases, they moved forward to the *test/trial* period as a result of subsequent conversations with colleagues who had successfully developed and implemented a CSL course. These faculty would be either *early* or *late majority* depending on how long it took to make the decision to adopt. By definition, none of our faculty were in the other later adopter categories since they were selected for having been among the first to adopt CSL during the first four years of institu-

tional support for CSL curriculum development.

How did these faculty learn about CSL initially? Results indicate that many of our faculty participants identified the campus CSLC as the source of *directed* contact (agents or leaders of the organization intentionally seek to introduce new ideas to achieve planned goals). Initially, the center director and later, the associate director were central in diffusing information about CSL in various forums such as academic senate retreats, conference presentations, faculty workshops, department meetings, and one-on-one conversations (i.e., by definition they were *innovators*). In any case, faculty were made aware of these opportunities through various means such as phone calls, flyers, and/or e-mail (list-serve) messages. A few participants had attended discipline-specific conferences during which presentations were made about CSL (e.g., American Philosophical Association, American Psychological Association, American Educational Research Association, National Communication Association). Three of our faculty participants had become aware of CSL at a previous campus (e.g., University of Colorado; CSU, Monterey Bay; University of California, Irvine).

Some faculty participants became aware of CSL through conversations with colleagues either currently teaching a CSL course, or who had taught a course with the early support of the CSLC. A few were encouraged by their department chairs to seek out information about CSL because of its relevance to an existing course. Many of our faculty indicated that one of the highlights of participating in the CSL course development workshops was the opportunity to share and exchange ideas with others ("opportunities to talk with other faculty were invaluable," "I wish I had more times when I could bounce ideas off other faculty," "we were brought together through service-learning and the exchange was incredible," "those who have the knowledge and skills seem more than willing to share it," "there's a culture among CSL faculty," "these conversations are a powerful thing"). These exchanges offered them new strategies for student reflection, methods for assessing student learning, ideas for syllabus construction (defining goals, objectives, assignments, and evaluation methods), and other pedagogical work. Many indicated they would continue to spread the word about CSL by encouraging others and sharing their experiences and expertise. At the same time, however, they confessed that rigorous schedules often prevent them from having these conversations regularly ("some faculty think this kind of thing takes away from their research," and yet "it seems this is what we should be doing but never have the time to do").

### *What are the Shared Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values of Faculty Who Engage in CSL?*

As previously mentioned, attitudes may indicate an individual's predisposition toward selectively attending to, and perceiving an innovation to be consistent with, personal beliefs and values (Hassinger & Pinkerton, 1986; Rogers, 1971). Moreover, attitudes, beliefs, and values are inextricably linked to the successful adoption of those innovations; collective attitudes, beliefs, and values can effect cultural change (Williamson, 1998). Understanding the attitudes, beliefs, and values of CSL faculty offers CSL practitioners important insight that is key to identifying and recruiting interested faculty; collectively, CSL faculty might be empowered to effect cultural change within the academy. Open-ended questions were asked to solicit information about shared attitudes, beliefs, and values among faculty who adopt CSL pedagogy. The following major categories of responses emerged: (1) teacher/faculty-centered, (2) student-centered, and (3) community-centered. The results are listed by frequency of responses from highest to lowest.

*Teacher/Faculty-Centered Factors.* Faculty participants cited the following teacher/faculty-centered attitudes, beliefs, and values (respectively) including: (1) the personal belief in doing good teaching ("when a faculty member adopts an innovation they're moving forward;" "It's a whole new way of thinking about teaching and learning"); (2) faculty can provide opportunities for students to engage in their own learning ("students learned how to develop a research project for a group that really needed their services"); (3) the value of learning new teaching strategies as a motivation for senior faculty ("I think it is important because by opening your mind you have new ways of learning and teaching;" "even the post tenure review requires that you remain active"); and (4) CSL is a person-centered alternative to the push for instructional technology (e.g., "innovation is defined lots of ways on our campus but usually it's associated with technology;" "students have to learn to talk to people, not just interface with computers"). Faculty-centered factors related to enhancing teaching effectiveness were important motivators for faculty at all career levels. These results also reflect those course-based factors found to motivate faculty to incorporate CSL into their teaching (Cantor, 1995; Hammond, 1994; Hesser, 1995). Clearly, faculty value the active and experiential learning methods, such as those associated with CSL that enhance student learning opportunities.

*Student-Centered Factors.* Faculty participants

identified the following student-centered attitudes, beliefs, and values as important reasons for using CSL in their classes: (1) the value of reflection as an opportunity to develop needed skills ("all at once, students are thinking, writing, and talking"); (2) students learn to accept responsibility for their own learning ("students take the information, process it, put it into action, and learn to accept the consequences"); (3) the belief that application enhances learning ("we can be catalysts for offering new management practices—the students become teachers"); (4) students learn more about the world in which they live ("students were asking for more real life experiences," "students realize the community is both a learning resource and a place where they can receive assistance and help"); (5) the value of human contact ("students have made a growing and delightful partnership with inner-city public schoolers"); (6) students can give back to others ("when they're done, they have a better sense of what's out there and what they can do to help"); (7) the value of learning many forms of diversity ("we live in a very diverse community—what a resource for learning"); and (8) CSL offers students opportunities for self-learning ("they learn the notion of themselves as actors in a wider sphere of socioeconomic and political activities"). Faculty enthusiasm for CSL was most apparent in these beliefs about the pedagogy's value for their students.

*Community-Centered Factors.* Community-centered motivations included: (1) the value of community as a resource for learning ("students learn that they just don't overcome community problems—they learn how to solve them"); (2) the value of making connections between people and organizations ("students change from being very nervous to very confident in their ability to work with others"); (3) the belief that communities have no boundaries ("what students learn needs to go beyond these four walls"); and (4) breaking down the "ivory tower" perception of the university ("we build rapport between university and community—it means we're more than just an ivory tower").

*Innovators and early adopters* are characterized by their eagerness to try new ideas, deal with abstractions and accept risks and leadership roles. Without some individuals' willingness to accept the potential for change, innovations may fail. By definition, potential adopters will move from the *perception* to *motivation* stages when they are open to ideas for social change and capable of seeking out needed information. Our results suggest the *innovator* and *early adopter* faculty represented by our sample share a positive *attitude* about innovative methods for teaching and learning. They rec-

ognize that CSL promotes civic-minded values, such as the need for making human connections, contributions to the community, and viewing the community as a resource for student learning; beliefs about teaching, including students accepting responsibility for their own learning; and the importance of learning about diversity within their communities, learning about “self,” and recognizing the value of new and innovative teaching strategies. Their communication and leadership skills offer opportunities to engage in social interaction for the purpose of obtaining and disseminating information—determinants of the *legitimation* stage—that are essential to the change process.

#### *What needs does CSL satisfy?*

Innovations, by definition, should be designed to satisfy particular needs. Needs are defined as a discrepancy between what one actually has and what one desires (Rogers, 1971). Hassinger and Pinkerton (1986) argue that innovations are more likely to be effective if individuals perceive them to be consistent with their attitudes and beliefs, and relevant to their needs. Our results suggest that CSL faculty share attitudes, beliefs, and values consistent with CSL. Identifying the pedagogical need(s) CSL satisfies furthers our ability to develop CSL programs, recruit faculty, and support faculty efforts. Faculty were asked to reflect on particular needs that were satisfied by adopting service-learning pedagogy. Again, the responses fell into three broad categories: (1) faculty/teaching needs, (2) student/learning needs, and (3) community/nonprofit needs.

*Faculty/Teaching Needs.* Faculty were clear about CSL fulfilling needs associated with more effective teaching, including the need to: (1) teach the value of community and citizenship; (2) develop a resource to enhance diversity learning (“students find they have to adjust to language, culture—more than we/they expect”); (3) connect theory and practice (“I needed a concrete way for students to understand abstract systems”); (4) augment the connection between learning goals, objectives, assignments, and assessment (“the CSL course syllabus work satisfied the need to improve my syllabi in other classes”); and (5) improve upon teaching (“I needed a way to spark my teaching and in-class discussions,” “I was feeling the need to get away from strict lecture”).

*Student/Learning Needs.* Our respondents strongly endorsed many student/learning needs that CSL satisfied: (1) expose students to social issues (“I needed a way to help them see the issues in the real world”); (2) learn the value of community and citizenship; (3) improve critical thinking, writing, and

oral communication skills (“they need to use the skills we’re teaching them”); and (4) enhance in-class learning with out-of-class experiences (“students need to get out of the classroom”).

*Community/Nonprofit Needs.* Meeting community partners’ needs was also important to these respondents, including the need to: (1) provide help to nonprofits that have limited resources (“we can provide volunteer personnel to facilitate work that otherwise wouldn’t get done”), and (2) provide an educated workforce for nonprofits (“agencies get an influx of volunteers”).

The stages of adoption previously described require that potential adopters recognize the need for the innovation and that it is consistent with shared attitudes, beliefs, and values. Without these determinants, adopters will not continue to move through the first four stages of perception, motivation, attitude change, and legitimation. Our results support the view that CSL is consistent with faculty, student, and community needs; hence, CSL early adopter faculty are likely to move to trial, evaluation—and eventual adoption. Integral to the evaluation stage, however, is the ability to weigh the benefits and costs of adoption.

#### *What are the benefits and costs of adopting CSL pedagogy?*

Key to our understanding of innovation and change is knowing that while an innovation can be introduced into a system, its success is largely determined by the recognition and acceptance of its benefits, and how much these outweigh the costs (Greene, Harchi, & Kohli, 1996; Rogers, 1971). Ideally, an innovation will be adopted if the benefits outweigh the costs/risks involved (either short- or long-term); this process is accomplished within the evaluation stage. CSL practitioners might benefit from faculty responses detailing what they perceive as benefits and costs associated with adopting CSL. The following major themes emerged regarding perceived *benefits* to (1) faculty, (2) students, and (3) community.

*Faculty Benefits.* Faculty generated a long list of perceived benefits of using CSL. These faculty benefits included: (1) taking the opportunity to work with community partners (i.e., developing relationships and satisfying a community need); (2) working with other faculty who “do” CSL (e.g., in workshops or other interactive contexts); (3) receiving encouragement for exploring the potential of CSL (“my chair defines it as professional development,” “my chair noted that it would fit my course”); (4) feeling hopeful that their colleagues will recognize the value of the innovation [in the review process]; (5) having the support from the



campus Community Service Learning Center readily available; (6) recognizing the potential for combining teaching, research, and service (“I teach it, I do it, I am starting a research project based upon student data,” “the workshops helped me recognize that I could do research based upon the CSL work I was doing,” “I’m hoping that some research will come out of this”); and (7) taking advantage of the opportunity to assess current teaching methods (“we all have to think about ways to go beyond the box of lecture, reading, and exams,” “I needed to try something new, to stretch out a bit and engage students in an innovative way”).

*Student Benefits.* Faculty perceived the following student benefits: (1) exploring career possibilities (“some students choose to continue their nonprofit work into their career”); (2) assessing (and possibly changing) personal values and beliefs; (3) dispelling stereotypes while increasing awareness of social issues; (4) learning interpersonal communication, critical thinking, and writing skills; (5) becoming aware that students can really make a difference; (6) establishing links between theory and reality; (7) making connections between academic learning and real world experiences; and (8) learning civic responsibility/duty.

*Community Benefits.* Important aspects of community benefits included: (1) creating the opportunity for those served by nonprofit agencies to “teach” the students something; (2) developing reports/work that might help with grant writing and funding opportunities; (3) maximizing the use of often dwindling resources; (4) capitalizing on the volunteer “labor force;” and (5) receiving the knowledge, skills, and abilities that the students bring.

While faculty were aware of many of CSL’s benefits, they also acknowledged discernible costs. The costs clustered into the same three common categories: (1) faculty, (2) students, and (3) community.

*Faculty Costs.* For faculty, the perceived costs were multifaceted and dealt with time constraints, negative evaluations by others, and technical issues. These included: (1) ensuring students receive the experiences needed to fulfill course requirements (“students are likely to get menial tasks and they don’t learn what they need to,” “the organizations weren’t always able to meet my expectations for students’ experiences,” “sometimes the students had to start over in midstream when the placements didn’t work”); (2) assessing problems with placements in community agencies (“most of the problems we had were with the placements,” “sometimes the agencies require too much training so not much is gained over the semester”); (3) dealing with negative reactions

from colleagues (“people have different views of what service is . . . of what CSL is,” “I don’t think [CSL] is appreciated—yet”); (4) recognizing the risk associated with student reactions to, and evaluations of, CSL; (5) recognizing the ambiguity about how the work will be evaluated in the Retention, Tenure, and Promotion process (“I have no idea how this will affect my review,” “our RTP process is vague”); (6) time to take advantage of available resources (writing proposals, etc.) from the campus Community Service Learning Center; and (7) time to revise/develop CSL courses. The “costs” our faculty participants identified closely paralleled the deterrents revealed by Abes, Jackson, and Jones (2002), especially with regard to balancing professional responsibilities, the need for faculty instruction and support in effective use of CSL, and the need for recognition in the faculty reward system. Additionally, our faculty expressed concerns about student learning, and echoed the need for empirical research supporting student learning outcomes associated with CSL.

*Student Costs.* Primarily, the cost to students is the perception that the service component is an addition to the course workload, rather than integrated and balanced with other assignments. Students who are balancing work, school, and in some cases family, have difficulty making time for the community service requirement. Hence, time is perceived as the most apparent cost for students.

*Community Costs.* For the community, the perceived costs clearly related to integrating student volunteers into the agency. These costs included: (1) ensuring students receive the experiences needed to fulfill course requirements; (2) dealing with students’ schedules/attendance (3) organizing student activities; and (4) training/preparing students for dealing with the population served. The benefits and costs of adopting CSL that emerged in our study augment the motivators and deterrents found by Abes, Jackson, and Jones (2002). However, after weighing the benefits against the costs, our faculty chose to move forward to complete the process of CSL adoption.

## Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this research was to augment our understanding of faculty characteristics for those who engage in innovative pedagogy, specifically CSL. The results extend our knowledge of CSL faculty in two important ways: individually and collectively. On an individual level, this study’s results provide support for the adopter categories and process offered by Rogers’ (1971) diffusion and adoption of innovations model. On the collective level, the results reveal a facet of shared atti-

tudes, beliefs, and values among faculty who embrace CSL pedagogy with the potential for effecting cultural change in higher education.

### *Individual Characteristics of CSL Faculty*

Revealing the characteristics and behaviors of early adopter faculty provides CSL practitioners with two important tools. First, it provides support for the theoretical model guiding this project that demonstrates the innovative nature of CSL pedagogy. Second, the findings provide a foundation upon which to build an inspiring network of faculty interested in CSL pedagogy, whose purpose would be to continue recruiting and supporting new faculty efforts. For instance, we know that early adopters are well integrated—communicatively—into the system; they take advantage of opportunities to connect with others while seeking out information about new ideas and innovations; additionally, they are willing to offer advice to potential adopters. Of equal importance, the early majority is an important link in the diffusion process, between those who are more willing and those less willing to take the risk to test and adopt an innovation. As early adopters and early majority, our faculty sample serves as an important link both characteristically and functionally in forwarding faculty CSL efforts.

Rogers' (1971) model includes significant information on innovators' personality characteristics and communication behaviors. To accomplish a comprehensive psychological profile of personality characteristics, an empirical personality inventory would need to be administered. While these factors were observed in our population, the interview format was not conducive to administering a standardized personality inventory. Future research could identify adopter categories by developing and testing a selective response instrument based on the personality characteristics and communication behaviors prescribed by the model.

### *Collective Characteristics of CSL Faculty*

Our study revealed that CSL faculty share definitive attitudes about CSL as a person-centered teaching innovation by consistently advocating the value of interpersonal connections between faculty, students, and community. They also saw CSL as a means of engaging students in their own learning, beliefs about civic responsibility, experiential learning, and the boundaries between community and university. Our respondents were highly cognizant of CSL's social and pedagogical values. They adhere to these attitudes, beliefs, and values strongly enough to take the risk to test and adopt CSL, despite possible resistance from colleagues. Clearly, they perceive the benefits of engaging in

CSL as outweighing the costs. Moreover, they readily identified particular teaching, learning, and community needs satisfied by CSL pedagogy. On a communicative level, these faculty selectively exposed themselves to information about opportunities provided for course development. They interpreted the information as consistent with their beliefs about teaching. They appreciated the opportunities to share and exchange information with other faculty about the process of course development. They also indicated they would continue to "spread the word" about CSL pedagogy by encouraging others and sharing their experiences and expertise—an aspect that is integral in moving through the legitimation to the test/trial stages. In fact, many of these faculty have participated in panel discussions, workshops, and other opportunities for information dissemination and indicated that they would continue to do so.

Simply speaking, interpersonal communication is inextricably linked to the potential for cultural change (Westley, 1973). Sustaining faculty participation has been noted as a significant challenge in perpetuating CSL efforts (Ward, 1998); however, a *learning-driven* model suggested by these results advocates a self-perpetuating process by involving increasing faculty numbers to effect change in the university culture at various levels. Learning-driven change is accomplished by "leaders who initiate change by developing the learning capabilities of their teachers [and] create environments with widespread commitment, involving the aspirations and capabilities of many people involved" (Vojtek & O'Brien-Vojtek, 2000, p. 77). Early adopter CSL faculty may lead other faculty to adopt CSL and change the institutional culture with regard to CSL. In addition, leaders might be administrators whose responsibilities center on curriculum and instruction, and/or faculty focused on faculty professional development. The process begins by creating opportunities for small groups to discuss the innovation and its usefulness within the context of the system. Next, increasingly larger numbers are invited to enter into similar conversations about goals and outcomes, and successes and failures. Finally, "people who share similar values and aspirations come together and the change process becomes self-perpetuating" (Vojtek & O'Brien-Vojtek), also referred to as a "reinforcing cycle" (Senge et al., 1999, p. 41). Members may come or go, but the process itself is "self-sustaining and continues to accelerate in its own growth and development" as long as the time, energy, and resources to support it are maintained (Vojtek & O'Brien-Vojtek). Meanwhile, the knowledge, skills, abilities, and proficiencies of those choosing to participate remain under constant

development. This is the foundation for innovative change efforts.

Changes in values, attitudes, and traditions effect cultural change within institutions and increase the likelihood that changes in curriculum and instruction become self-perpetuating. Learning-driven change begins with a process of identifying a core of faculty and extending their interest into the larger academic community. By identifying leaders capable of fostering the talents of their colleagues (by definition, *innovators*), the process becomes self-perpetuating as increasingly larger faculty numbers participate in conversations about the innovation (*early adopters/early majority*). Key to this viewpoint is the identification of *collective attitudes, beliefs, and values* about teaching, learning, and community, and an understanding that shared principles can effect cultural change.

As an illustration, the present study's results suggest that "costs" of adopting CSL include ambiguity regarding how the work will be evaluated in the RTP process ("sometimes senior faculty who are on the [RTP] committees don't know what CSL is"). There is also concern about dealing with negative reactions from colleagues ("my colleagues think my time would be better spent doing research"). Realities such as these heighten the importance of faculty professional development efforts at various levels from *within* the organization. These are essential to creating a supportive climate or culture for faculty CSL efforts. Beyond incorporating support for pedagogical innovations into strategic plans, universities should consider ways in which the process of change in curriculum and instruction become self-perpetuating and self-sustaining. In this way it is possible to maximize the use of resources for instructional efforts. A learning-driven model advocates that faculty "leaders" (e.g., faculty professional development specialists) accept the responsibility for promoting change by informing members of review committees about CSL. Faculty sustain their efforts to develop colleagues' learning capabilities and eventually the process becomes a "reinforcing cycle" (Senge et al., 1999, p. 41). In fact, faculty involvement in CSL is more likely to occur when faculty colleagues lead the initiative (Gelmon, Holland, Shinnamon, & Morris, 1998; Morton & Troppe, 1996). Effectiveness is increased when experienced CSL faculty serve as mentors for recruiting and educating faculty new to CSL pedagogy (Abes, Jackson, & Jones, 2002). By identifying the characteristics of faculty who adopt pedagogical innovations such as CSL, the foundation for a learning-driven model for cultural change becomes apparent.

In summary, the present study sought to augment

our understanding of faculty characteristics of those who adopt innovative pedagogy, specifically CSL. Drawing on the diffusion and adoption of innovations model, categories of adopters were characterized according to attitudes, beliefs, and values about the needs fulfilled by CSL pedagogy, its costs, and benefits. Taken together, results suggest that revealing these faculty characteristics elucidates our understanding at two important levels: individually and collectively. Individually, faculty who embrace CSL can further efforts by seeking out information and sharing it with others, ultimately creating a network of CSL practitioners; collectively, shared attitudes, beliefs, and values can effect cultural change within the academy for the purpose of promoting and challenging obstacles to adopting pedagogical innovations such as community service learning.

### Note

<sup>1</sup> The Community Service Learning Center on this campus has developed a guide for assisting faculty in the RTP process according to the criteria specified for each college and discipline, available at <http://www.csulb.edu/centers/cslc/services/>

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